

**Testimony of  
The Honorable Ro Khanna  
Before the House Veterans' Affairs  
Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity  
“Legislative Hearing on Draft legislation”  
October 11, 2017**

**Opening**

- Thank you, Chairman Arrington and Ranking Member O'Rourke, for holding today's legislative hearing and for inviting me, along with several of my House colleagues to testify today.
- I am Congressman Ro Khanna, and I have the honor of representing Silicon Valley as part of the Seventeenth Congressional District of California.
- Last week, after a few months of meetings and discussions with think tanks, companies that offer apprenticeships, veterans services organizations, the National Association of State Approving Agencies, and members of this committee, including its leadership, I introduced H.R. 3949, the Veterans Apprenticeship and Labor Opportunity Reform, or VALOR, Act.
- It is bipartisan legislation that will provide veterans greater access to apprenticeship training programs following their service.
- I want to thank committee and subcommittee staff from both sides of the aisle for working with my office in identifying to the real problem that companies currently face and helping us develop H.R. 3949 that is targeted, yet important.
- I also want to acknowledge the Chairman and Ranking Member of this Subcommittee for meeting with me and for being original cosponsors of the VALOR Act.

- I'm proud to say that this bill is bicameral in nature, as Senators Cotton and Tillis have introduced companion legislation in the US Senate as S. 1936.
- Finally, I must thank Joe Westcott, Legislative Director at the National Association of State Approving Agencies, for taking a chance on a freshman member of Congress and working with us in development and endorsement of the VALOR Act. It has been a pleasure to get to meet and know Joe and to have his support for this legislation.

### **Legislation Itself**

- Currently, private employers who offer apprenticeship programs in more than one state must register with each state approval agency individually.
- This trail of paperwork and burdensome review process often discourages employers from opening these apprenticeship programs to veterans.
- The VALOR Act would streamline the registration process for employers, still allow approval agencies to certify programs, and give veterans more opportunities to gain employment through apprenticeship programs.
- Apprenticeship programs allow veterans to gain skills needed for 21st century jobs.
- Something as simple as paperwork should not stop employers from hiring veterans.
- The VALOR Act would remove administrative hurdles and offer more apprenticeship to returning veterans.

## **Closing**

- I appreciate the opportunity to appear before the subcommittee today to offer my perspective on this small, but important bill.
- I am happy to answer any questions that my colleagues on the subcommittee may have.